

Percy and Small Shipyard  
263 Washington Street  
Bath, Maine  
Sagadahoc County

HAER No. ME-1

HAER  
ME,  
12-BATH,  
10-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

ME-1

HAER  
ME,  
12-BATH,  
10-

Percy and Small Shipyard

DATE: 1894

LOCATION: 263 (or 451) Washington Street  
Bath, Maine

DESIGNED BY: Unknown

OWNER: Bath Marine Museum  
963 Washington Street  
Bath, Maine

SIGNIFICANCE: The Percy and Small Shipyard was built in 1894, and was comprised of five buildings; a mill and joiners shop (carpenter shop), paint shop, caulking shed, a mould loft, and a building containing a transformer or generator. Some forty-four ships (mostly schooners) were built between 1894 and 1920 including the largest wooden merchant ship to carry the American flag--the Wyoming. Also built by Percy and Small was the "Windjammer", the largest wooden ship ever built. The shipyard was restored by the Bath Marine Museum, which acquired the property in 1971. It is probably the only shipyard which built large wooden ships remaining in this country.

Percy & Small  
Shipyard  
HAER No. ME-1 (2)

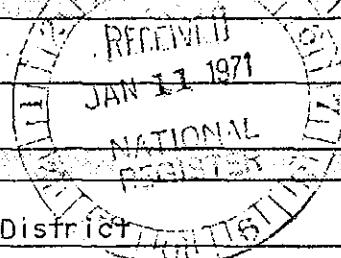
Form 10-300  
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Maine	
COUNTY: Sagadahoc	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER 76-23-0006	DATE JAN 11 1971



1. NAME	
COMMON: Percy and Small Shipyard	
AND/OR HISTORIC:	

2. LOCATION			
STREET AND NUMBER: 451 Washington Street (1st District)			
CITY OR TOWN: Bath Zip Code 04530 Hon. Peter N. Kyros)			
STATE Maine	CODE 23	COUNTY: Sagadahoc	CODE 023

3. CLASSIFICATION			
CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Comments <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) Museum Storage Warehouse

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY	
OWNER'S NAME: Mrs. L. M. C. Smith	
STREET AND NUMBER: 3460 School House Lane	
CITY OR TOWN: Germantown, Philadelphia	STATE: Pennsylvania

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION	
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC: Courthouse (Sagadahoc County)	
STREET AND NUMBER:	
CITY OR TOWN: Bath	STATE: Maine

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS	
TITLE OF SURVEY:	
DATE OF SURVEY: <input type="checkbox"/> Federal <input type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> County <input type="checkbox"/> Local	
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:	
STREET AND NUMBER:	
CITY OR TOWN:	STATE:

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: Maine	COUNTY: Sagadahoc	ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
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AER No. ME-1

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
slightly <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

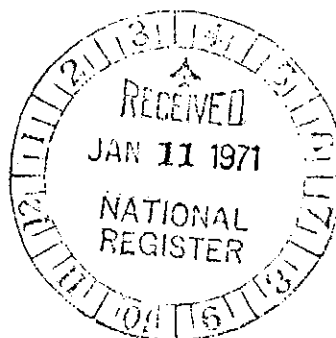
DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Percy and Small Shipyard is located on a three acre lot at 451 Washington Street, about three-fourths of a mile south of the large Bath Iron Works Shipyard complex.

The shipyard's four old buildings are situated close to the Kennebec River.

The shipyard area has become covered with undergrowth since shipbuilding operations ceased in 1920. Only remnants remain of what used to be the ship ways. The only visible evidence to indicate ways were located on the site are earth impressions, pieces of rotting wood and a few pieces of rusty metal hardware which may be found.

The buildings that remain on the lot have lapsed into a state of deterioration. Before the shipyard ceased operation, the buildings were kept in good repair as evidenced by enclosed photo of the 1909 shipyard. The four remaining buildings, all of basic wooden construction, include a mold loft and a pitch oven. Other than being used somewhat as storage areas for the Bath Marine Museum, the buildings have not served any useful purpose in recent years.



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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# 8. SIGNIFICANCE

## PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- ☐ Pre-Columbian ☐ 16th Century ☐ 18th Century ☐ 20th Century  
☐ 15th Century ☐ 17th Century ☒ 19th Century

## SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

## AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |   |   |  |  |
|---|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal     | <input type="checkbox"/> Education              | <input type="checkbox"/> Political                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric    | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering            | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy       | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Industry    | <input type="checkbox"/> Science                   |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture    | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention              | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture                 |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture   | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian       |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art            | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater                   |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce       | <input type="checkbox"/> Military               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                  |  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation   |   |  |  |

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The City of Bath, Maine, and the surrounding area has long been closely associated with the shipbuilding industry. As early as 1607 the Popham Colonists built the 30 ton VIRGINIA, the first English vessel built in America.

In 1762 Bath's first commercial shipyard was opened. After the Revolutionary period, with the help of protective legislation by Congress, local maritime activities expanded rapidly.

The ships of the local merchants, ever extending their cruises began pouring in wealth, and for more than half a century the operation of ships and trade were the more important thing; though the expanding shipyards and the related industries were always an important industrial community.

In 1855 Bath ranked fifth in the country in point of amount of tonnage registered, enrolled and licensed, being outranked only by New York, Boston, Philadelphia and Baltimore.

In 1857 over 500 ships were operating out of the Bath Customs District.

Most of this early trade involved commerce with world-wide connections. During this era, Bath shipyards were mainly producing the "Down Easter", a type of "Half-Clipper" noted for having speed without sacrificing cargo space.

After the Civil War, the commercial phase of local maritime activities entered upon a decline, but the shipyards and skill in shipbuilding, which commerce had created in Bath, continued to grow, and for another half century Bath supplied the nation with the finest ships of wood.

After the Civil War, with the decline of world trade, the schooner came into its own because of its ability to maneuver in the tricky coastal breezes as well as being adaptable to crews of about one-half the size of a square-rigged ship.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

Percy & Small Shipyard  
HAER No. ME-1 (5)

HAER No. ME-1

STATE Maine	
COUNTY Sagadahoc	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER 71.7.23.0006	DATE 7/24/69

(Number all entries)

-2- Percy and Small Shipyard  
(Con't)

The Percy and Small Shipyard was involved in the building of 44 vessels between 1894 and 1920, 42 of which were schooners. The Percy and Small Yard earned a reputation as one of the most notable of the strictly modern builders of wooden sailing craft.

The owners, Capt. Samuel R. Percy and Frank A. Small, specialized in the construction of large schooners for the coastwise trade.

During the yard's operating years, from 1894-1920, all but two of the vessels turned out were four, five and six-masted schooners ranging in size from 700 to more than 3700 tons.

Percy and Small managed a splendid fleet at one time, measuring 25,000 tons, capable of moving 400,000 tons of coal along the New England coast each year.

The most famous of the schooners built at the Percy and Small Shipyard was the WYOMING. This huge vessel, built for the Yard's own use in 1909, was 329 feet long and weighed 3,730 tons.

This fore and aft rigged "Windjammer" was the largest wooden vessel ever built.

The WYOMING went down off from Pollack Rip Lightship in 1924.

Another well-known Percy and Small vessel was the ELEANOR A. PERCY, the second six-master ever built and one of the largest at 3,401 tons.

Most of the wood for building the WYOMING and the other Percy and Small vessels came from the southern part of the country. The local wood supply had been largely exhausted by the tremendous demand put on the local forests by the local shipyards (over 600 full ships were built in Bath alone) so the Percy and Small Yard had to use Virginia oak, Georgia pine, and Carolina hackmatack for ship construction.

The Bath shipbuilding tradition has carried over to the present time. The Bath Iron Works Shipyard is famous for its destroyer and minesweeper construction.

The Percy and Small Shipyard is possibly the only existent wood shipbuilding yard which built large merchant vessels in the country.

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9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Owen, Henry Wilson, History of Bath 1936 Chapters 24 and 50

Rowe, William Hutchinson, Maritime History of Maine 1948 pp. 130, 164, 241, 243 and 244.

Marks, Lionel P., The Maritime History of Maine 1930 Thesis

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	0 0 0	0 0 0		43 0 53	41 0 0	69 0 49
NE	0 0 0	0 0 0				8 0 0
SE	0 0 0	0 0 0				
SW	0 0 0	0 0 0				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **Three**

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:  
**John Briggs, Historian**

ORGANIZATION: **State Park and Recreation Commission** DATE: **July 28, 1970**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**State House**

CITY OR TOWN: **Augusta** STATE: **Maine** CODE: **23 18**

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National ☐ State ☒ Local ☐

Name Lawrence Stuart  
**Lawrence Stuart**

Title Director

Date 1/14/71

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Edward A. Connolly  
Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST:

William M. Mawdsley  
Keeper of The National Register

Date \_\_\_\_\_

SEE INSTRUCTIONS